

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 PRS-01 PM-04 NSC-05
SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SSO-00
INRE-00 NSCE-00 L-03 H-01 /074 W
-----312340Z 111834 /66

O P 312200Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5421
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO
USUN 516
AMCONSUL BELIZE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GUATEMALA 2005

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR GT BH US
SUBJECT: GOG REACTS STRONGLY TO CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY ON BELIZE

1. BEGIN UNCLAS SUMMARY. GUATEMALAN PRESS CARRIES WIRE
SERVICE ACCOUNT OF A "REPORT" OF A HOUSE INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEE WHICH STATES PRESIDENT
LAUGERUD IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT INDEPENDENT BELIZE. GOG
HAS REACTED STRONGLY BY PUBLICLY DENYING ACCURACY OF
ALLEGED POSITION BY PRESIDENT AND PRIVATELY BY ASKING
EMBASSY IF STORY ABOUT HOUSE REPORT IS ACCURATE. ACTING FOREIGN MIN-
ISTER ALSO TOLD PRESS THAT BEFORE ANY FINAL AGREEMENT WITH
BRITISH ON BELIZE IS SIGNED TI WILL BE SUBMITTED TO
APPROVAL BY "NATIONAL ASSEMBLY". ACTION REQUESTED:
TEXT BY IMMEDIATE CABLE OF RELEVANT PORTION OF
TESTIMONY GIVEN IN EXECUTIVE SESSION ON BELIZE
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DISPUTE AS WELL AS DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE.
END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING VAGUE REPORTS IN MORNING PRESS, AFTERNOON
DAILY LA TARDE PUBLISHED MARCH 30 TEXT
OF ACAN-EFE WIRE SERVICE STORY DATED LINED PANAMA AND
ENTITLED, "LAUGERUD IS READY TO ACCEPT INDEPENDENCE OF

BELIZE". DISPATCH READS: "AN OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RELEASED TODAY (MARCH 29) IN PANAMA STATES THAT GUATEMALAN PRESIDENT KJELL EUGENIO LAUGERUD GARCIA WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE INDEPENDENCE OF BELIZE, A TERRITORY IN DISPUTE WITH GREAT BRITAIN. THE REPORT, OBTAINED TODAY BY ACAN-EFE, CONTAINS THE RESULTS OF HEARINGS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS OF THE CITED COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. ACCORDING TO THIS REPORT THE NEGOTIATORS OF PRESIDENT LAUGERUD INDICATED LAST YEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE THE EXISTENCE OF AN INDEPENDENT BELIZE. THE STATEMENT WAS MADE PRIOR TO THE 21ST AND 22ND OF SEPTEMBER , 1976, WHEN BELIZEAN PRIME MINISTER GEORGE PRICE, GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER ADOLFO MOLINA ORANTES AND BRITISH MINISTER OF STATE TED ROWLANDS MET IN PANAMA TO DISCUSS THE BELIZEAN QUESTION. THE REPORT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, HOWEVER, ADDS THAT HARDENED ATTITUDES REEMERGED WITHIN THE ARMY WHEN VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES BEGAN TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR THE 1978 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, AND CERTAIN OFFICERS THAT FAVORED A STRONG POSITION ON BELIZE HAVE BEEN REPORTED AS CONSPIRATORS."

3. PRESIDENT'S PRESS OFFICE HAS RELEASED A STATEMENT WHICH READS: "THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC, IN RELATION TO A NEWS AGENCY CABLE, DATED TODAY, ABOUT A REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, RELEASED IN PANAMA, ABOUT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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SITUATION RELATIVE TO THE PROBLEM OF BELIZE, GUATEMALAN TERRITORY DETAINED BY GREAT BRITAIN, SAYS:

- A) THAT AT NO TIME HAS THE PRESIDENT BEEN DISPOSED TO ACCEPT THE INDEPENDENCE OF BELIZE;
- B) THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN CLEAR IN THE SENSE THAT GUATEMALA DOES NOT ACCEPT NOR WILL IT ACCEPT A UNILATERAL GRANT OF INDEPENDENCE TO BELIZE;
- C) THAT PURSUANT TO THIS POLICY NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GUATEMALA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM CONTINUE;
- D) THAT IN RELATION TO THE PRECEDING IT EMPHATICALLY REJECTS THE CONCEPTS PUBLISHED IN THE AFOREMENTIONED REPORT."

4. ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER OBIOLS TOLD REPORTERS THAT GUATEMALA'S POSITION "IS PERFECTLY CLEAR" THAT IT WILL NOT RECOGNIZE OR TOLERATE THE UNILATERAL INDEPENDENCE OF BELIZE. ANY NATIONAL BODY OF ANOTHER COUNTRY CAN "SAY WHAT IT WANTS" ON THE FUTURE OF BELIZE "WHICH

DOES NOT ADD OR SUBTRACT ANYTHING" BECAUSE THE DISPUTE IS THE SOLE CONCERN OF THE GUATEMALANS, BELIZEANS, AND THE BRITISH. "INTERNALLY IN THE US THEY CAN DO WHAT THEYSWANT BUT THIS DOES NOT IN ANY WAY OR DETERMINE THE WILL OF THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT. WE ARE RESPECTFUL OF THE SELF DETERMINATION OF PEOPLES AND DO NOT INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES. WHETHER THIS REPORT IS TRUE OR NOT, GUATEMALAN RIGHTS TO BELIZE ARE NOT SUBJECT TO DISCUSSION BY THE US CONGRESS."

5. OBIOLS THEN RESPONDED TO FREQUENT CHARGES LOCALLY THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY IS CONDUCTING ITS BELIZE DIPLOMACY IN SECRET BY SAYING THAT "NO FINAL AGREEMENT WITH GREAT BRITAIN WILL BE SIGNED WITHOUT FIRST ALLOWING THE AGREEMENT TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE GUATEMALAN PEOPLE. UNQUESTIONABLY IT WILL HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, COMPOSED OF THE CONGRESS AND MEMBERS OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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COUNCIL OF STATE". END UNCLASSIFIED.

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 PRS-01 PM-04 NSC-05
SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SSO-00
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-----312338Z 111936 /66

O P 312200Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5422
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
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AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO
USUN 517
AMCONSUL BELIZE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GUATEMALA 2005

6. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. FOREIGN MINISTRY
OFFICIAL OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY RANK VISITED EMBASSY
MARCH 31 TO INQUIRE WHETHER EMBASSY COULD CONFIRM
ACCURACY OF ACAN-EFE REPORT. HE WAS TOLD (ACCURATELY
AS OF THAT MOMENT) THAT EMBASSY HAD NO INFORMATION
BUT WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH FONOFF AS SOON AS
WE HAVE CONFIRMATION FROM DEPARTMENT.

7. COMMENT: EMBASSY WAS ALREADY, PRIOR TO THIS DEVELOP-
MENT, SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT STEADILY GROWING
BELIEF WITHIN GOG OF DELIBERATE DELAYS IN DELIVERY
OF EQUIPMENT TO GUATEMALAN ARMED FORCES, US INTERFERENCE
IN ATTEMPTS BY GUATEMALA TO BUY EQUIPMENT ELSEWHERE,
AND EVEN ESPIONAGE BY MILGP. FACT THAT THESE BELIEFS
HAVE NO BASIS WHATEVER HAS NOT PREVENTED THEM FROM
SPREADING AMONG US AND GUATEMALAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY,
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GUATEMALAN CABINET, AND MILITARY. IN WAKE OF HUMAN
RIGHTS REPORT, GOG ALSO ACUTELY SENSITIVE RIGHT NOW TO
ANYTHING THAT CAN BE INTERPRETED AS US INTERFERENCE IN
ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS, ESPECIALLY ON ISSUE MOST IMPORTANT
TO IT, BELIZE.

8. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT ACAN-EFE REPORT IS BASED ON
TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY BEFORE EXECUTIVE SESSION OF
HIRC SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEPTEMBER 16, 1976, BY DIA ANALYST.
TRANSCRIPT HAS REPORTEDLY RECENTLY BEEN MADE PUBLIC.
IF THIS PROVES TO BE THE CASE, EMBASSY WILL BE IN
UNPLEASANT POSITION OF HAVING TO CONFIRM TO GOG
THAT US GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE HAS INDEED REVEALED TO US
CONGRESS SECRET GUATEMALAN NEGOTIATING POSITION IN
GOG DISCUSSIONS WITH BRITISH. THIS IN TURN IS BOUND
TO HARDEN STANCE OF GOG IN TALKS WITH BRITISH.
ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER IN PRESIDENT'S NAME HAS NOW
HAD TO PUBLICLY REPUDIATE EARLIER WILLINGNESS IT HAD
EXPRESSED IN PRIVATE TO ACCEPT INDEPENDENT BELIZE. WHOLE
EPISODE WILL OBVIOUSLY STRENGTHEN HANDS OF THE HARDLINERS
WITHIN THE GUATEMALAN MILITARY AND RESTRICT
PRESIDENT LAUGERUD'S FREEDOM OF MANUEVER.

8. FULL TEXT OF TESTIMONY, CIRCUMSTANCES OF RELEASE,
AND DPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE REQUESTED.
BOSTER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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